



Washington and Betsy Ross

*A DRAMATIC ACTION
IN TWO SCENES*

BY

PERCY MACKAYE

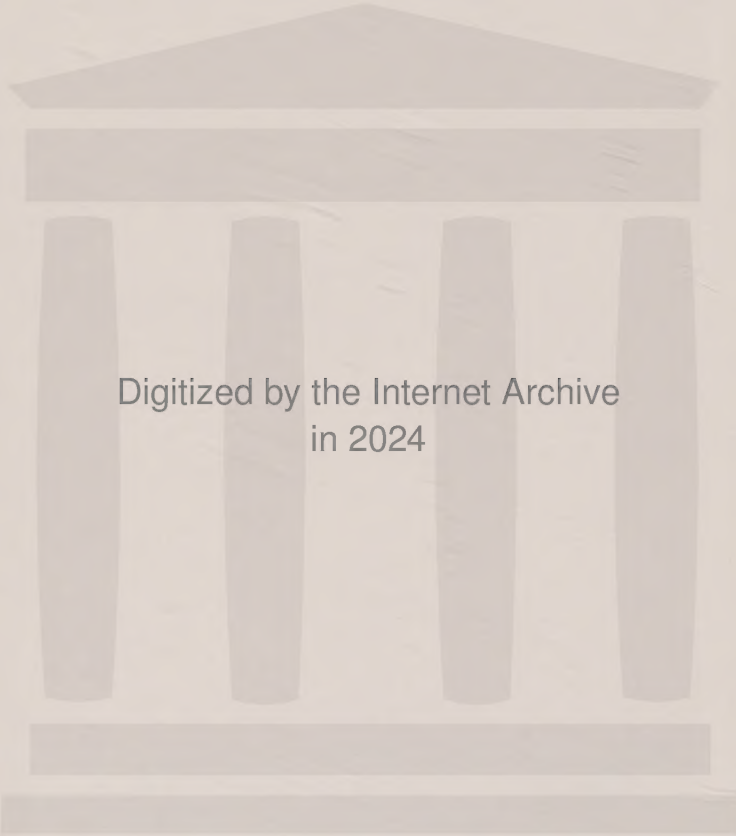
An Arrangement from the Three-Act Play Entitled

WASHINGTON,
THE MAN WHO MADE US
A Ballad-Play by Percy MacKaye

NEW YORK
SAMUEL FRENCH
PUBLISHER
25 WEST 45TH STREET

LONDON
SAMUEL FRENCH, LTD.
26 SOUTHAMPTON ST.
STRAND

PRICE 50 CENTS



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2024

ATLANTA-FULTON PUBLIC LIBRARY

Washington and Betsy Ross

A DRAMATIC ACTION
IN TWO SCENES

BY
PERCY MACKAYE

An Arrangement from the Three-Act Play Entitled

WASHINGTON,
THE MAN WHO MADE US

A Ballad-Play by Percy MacKaye

COPYRIGHT, 1918, BY PERCY MACKAYE

COPYRIGHT, 1927, BY PERCY MACKAYE

All Rights Reserved

CAUTION: Professionals and amateurs are hereby warned that "WASHINGTON AND BETSY ROSS," being fully protected under the copyright laws of the United States of America, the British Empire, including the Dominion of Canada, and the other countries of the Copyright Union, is subject to a royalty, and anyone presenting the play without the consent of the author or his authorized agent will be liable to the penalties by law provided. Applications for the amateur acting rights must be made to Samuel French, 25 West 45th Street, New York, N. Y.

NEW YORK
SAMUEL FRENCH
PUBLISHER
25 WEST 45TH STREET

LONDON
SAMUEL FRENCH, LTD.
26 SOUTHAMPTON STREET
STRAND

CLOSED
812
MacKaye

All Rights Reserved

"WASHINGTON AND BETSY ROSS" is fully protected by copyright in the United States of America, the British Empire, including the Dominion of Canada, and all countries of the Copyright Union, and all rights reserved.

In its present form this play is dedicated to the reading public only, and no performance, representation, production, recitation, public reading or radio broadcasting may be given except by special arrangement with Samuel French, 25 West 45th Street, New York, N. Y.

It may be presented by amateurs upon payment of a royalty of Ten Dollars for each performance, payable to Samuel French one week before the date when the play is given.

Whenever the play is produced the following notice must appear on all programs, printing and advertising for the play: "Produced by special arrangement with Samuel French of New York."

B&T. 40

6-20-27

B 165

CHARACTERS AND SCENES

SCENE I

In a Scene Loft.

PLACE and TIME: *At the Old South Theatre, Philadelphia: winter of 1778.*

CHARACTERS: *Three men, two women.*

(A Scene-Shifter—QUILLOQUON)

(Two Children with Paint-Pots—the BOY and the GIRL)

CAPTAIN JOHN ANDRÉ

GENERAL SIR WILLIAM HOWE

GENERAL KNYPHAUSEN

POLLY REDMOND

BETSY ROSS

TRANSITION

QUILLOQUON—sings, to dulcimer

Ballad: *"Down by the Cold Hill-Sidey."*

Ballad: *"Gypsy Davy."*

SCENE II

SCENE: *A triumphal Archway.*

PLACE and TIME: *Philadelphia, Spring of 1778.*

CHARACTERS: *Six men, two women.*

(A Ragged Singer—QUILLOQUON)

"A KNIGHT" *(Captain André)*

"A LADY" *(Polly Redmond)*

THREE SOLDIERS

CHARACTERS AND SCENES—*Continued*

(*A Bugler*—QUILLOQUON)

WASHINGTON

LAFAYETTE

HAMILTON

PRESIDENT LAURENS

OFFICERS

CIVILIANS

BETSY ROSS

FINALE

Ballad: "Betsy Ross."

QUILLOQUON *sings and dances.*

THE CHILDREN *sing refrain and dance with him.*

PREFATORY NOTE

The Dramatic Action here printed is an excerpt only of the complete Ballad Play by Percy MacKaye, in three acts and a prologue, entitled, "Washington, the Man Who Made Us," published by Alfred A. Knopf, 730 Fifth Avenue, New York City; and this excerpt comprises the Tenth and Twelfth Actions, together with the Eighth and Ninth Transitions, of the Third Act of that three-act play. A Note to this effect should be printed, at the head of the Cast of Characters, in all amateur performances given of this Action; and the author requests that two copies of the program be sent, with press notices, to him at his address, Harvard Club, New York City.

The music and words of the four ballads included in the text of this Action ("A Fighter Would A-fiddling Go," "Down by the Cold Hill-Sidey," "Gypsy Davy," and "I've Lost My Heart to Betsy"), with illustrations by Arvia MacKaye, are published by the H. W. Gray Co., 159 East 48th Street, New York City, and may be obtained through Samuel French.

The ballad music indeed is an important and essential feature of the whole performance, to which its appropriate rendition will supply elements of charm and dramatic variety. In the Finale especially—in case an ensemble tableau is preferred to the effects described in the stage directions—a resourceful stage-manager will know how variously to adapt the ending to his acting material, in mass effects of pageantry surrounding the Flag, wherein the acting participants may, if desired, join their voices to those of Quilloquon and the Children in the melodiously rhythmic refrain of the Ballad of Betsy Ross.

6 WASHINGTON AND BETSY ROSS

In a great chair (right), over which is thrown a rich hued tapestry, sits a stout MIDDLE-AGED MAN, in the uniform of a British General. Near him, standing, is a tall man, with fierce black beard, long moustachios, towering brass helmet and the uniform of a Hessian officer.

In the left background—in front of some tall decorated screens—stands a fiddler (QUILLOQUON), dressed in a strange bright-colored smock, worn over his work clothes.

The two CHILDREN are clad likewise, and—where they stand holding the paint-pots—join in the chorus of the ballad-song, to which QUILLOQUON partly fiddles—partly directs them with his bow—as he sings.

Midway of the song's first stanza the curtains part.

THE FIDDLER

A fighter would a-fiddling go;
Instead of his sword he carried a bow,
All for to fiddle it high and low
Among the greenrooms gay, O!

FIDDLER AND CHILDREN

Jackie, boy!—Master!
Sing ye well?—very well!
Hey down, ho down,
Derry, derry down!
Among the greenrooms gay, O!

*To my Hey down, down!
With my Ho down, down!
Hey down, ho down,
Derry, derry down!
Among the greenrooms gay, O!*

THE FIDDLER

He fiddled all day until 'twas night,
He fiddled all dark until 'twas light,
All for to fiddle away the fight
Among the greenrooms gay, O!

FIDDLER AND CHILDREN

*Jackie boy!—Master!
Sing ye well?—very well!
Hey down, ho down,
Derry, derry down!
Among the greenrooms gay, O!*
[*As the song concludes, the BRITISH OFFICER,
slapping his thigh, exclaims loudly:*]

THE BRITISH OFFICER

Bravo, Master Scene-shifter! You sing well, with
your Jackie-boy, and Jill, too.

[*To the YOUNG MAN on the ladder.*]

Where did you pick up this fellow?

THE YOUNG MAN

Oh, here in the theatre, General: a jack-of-all-
trades. He helps me here in the scene-loft.

[*Pointing.*]

8 WASHINGTON AND BETSY ROSS

How do you like our new curtain, for the Old South?

THE BRITISH OFFICER

Prodigious good! A touch of extravagance that takes me. Your brush is as gallant as your sword, Captain André.

THE YOUNG MAN

[Turns with a smile and slight bow.]

Sir William Howe does me honor.

HOWE

Devil a bit! I saw your new drop-scene at the last performance—that landscape and cascade. Hogarth himself couldn't beat it. And so this is the new curtain for tomorrow night?

ANDRÉ

Yes, General. 'Tis just finished.

[Tossing his brushes to QUILLOQUON, he comes down the ladder, while QUILLOQUON and the Children go off through the curtains, right.]

HOWE

What's the play?

ANDRÉ

"Douglas."

HOWE

Who plays the title-part?

ANDRÉ

I do, Sir.

HOWE

Well said, youngster! You'll provide my staff with Garrick and Sir Joshua combined. Who gives the Prologue?

ANDRÉ

I plead very guilty, Sir. I've wrote it.

HOWE

What—Oliver Goldsmith, too! Sure, Captain André, I must raise your rank to Major of Dramatics.

ANDRÉ

[*Laughing.*]

'Twould be only fitting, Sir William. You yourself, Sir, have converted the theatre of Mars to the temple of Melpomene. Thanks to you, Philadelphia is now the Athens of America.

THE HESSIAN OFFICER

[*With a strong German accent.*]

Ya—so. Here is now goot vinter quarters: plendy of goot music and liquors.

HOWE

And sour-kROUT, Knyphausen! Better than Trenton, a year ago, eh? How about that serenade the Yankees gave you Hessians o' Christmas night,—ha?

[HowE roars with laughter.]

KNYPHAUSEN

De tamn Yankees dey eat deir own medicine now, General. You hear de last news from Valley Forge—ya?

HOWE

Eh?—What news?

KNYPHAUSEN

Meester Vashington he is now tie up his breeches mit wrapping strings. For why?—he is cut off his last button, to buy him a frozen potato.—Haha!

HOWE

Ha! Hath he? Well, well, poor old fox, he shall have a hot sirloin—when I catch him. He's a gentleman and a sportsman—George Washington. Next spring—after I've frozen out his little rebellion—he and I shall go duck-shooting together. 'Tis jollier sport than this man-hunting.

KNYPHAUSEN

Sport! Ya—dere you are, you Anglo-Saxons! Al-

ways you *play* your var—by de pretty rules, like a game.

HOWE

A game, well, what the devil else is war?

KNYPHAUSEN

Var is business, Sir Villiam.

HOWE

Business be damned! War is a great national sport, sir. Learn the rules and play according.

[*Rising.*]

Knyphausen, I'm captain of this cricket match. When the boys in your country learn bat-and-ball, they'll learn to understand British soldiers; aye, sir, and American.—Now, André, I clean forgot: I must be off.

ANDRÉ

So soon, General?

HOWE

I've lost my dog. God above, sir, Jack! my best hound—I've lost him. Took first prize at the show. I wouldn't swap him for a battalion. I must set the town in search.

[*Taking out and handing a paper.*]

Here, Knyphausen, you have legs—hurry ahead of me to Headquarters. This paper gives his full inven-

tory.—Superb foxhound—good old Jack! Aye, sir,—
a dozen battalions!

KNYPHAUSEN

[*Taking the paper.*]

For vone dog!

[*Scowling with savage disdain.*]

Gotteswillen!—Vat for a var!

[*As he is about to stride out through the curtains, left, two young women appear there—one in a bright-colored gown, the other dressed in grey like a Quaker. Seeing the Hessian, they start aside—the first suppressing a scream, as* KNYPHAUSEN, *bowing fiercely, brushes rudely past and goes out, muttering.*]

Pardon, Mesdames!

THE FIRST YOUNG WOMAN

O—Captain André!

ANDRÉ

Mistress Polly,—ladies!

POLLY

[*Looking after KNYPHAUSEN.*]

Why is one of *those* here?

HOWE

[*Bursting out.*]

God knows, Madam! His Majesty hired 'em, not

me. Manners of mud-turtles! That one is a colonel, but he butters his bread with his thumb.—Pray introduce me, Captain.

ANDRÉ

Sir William—I present you to Mistress Polly Redmond, and——

POLLY

And my friend,—Captain,—Mistress Betsy Ross: both loyal *rebels*, Sir William!

HOWE

[*Bowing, as they both curtsy.*]

I bow to your conquest, fair enemies!

POLLY

Oh, but Captain, I've only a minute. I've run in to give you my answer.

ANDRÉ

Ah! So you *will* sing for us tomorrow night—before my Prologue?

POLLY

All my repertoire!

ANDRÉ

I am overwhelmed.

POLLY

You *will* be—when you hear me!

[*Handing a paper.*]

Look at my numbers.

ANDRÉ

[*Reads.*]

“War and Washington,” “Cooped up in a Town,”
“Burgoyne’s Defeat”——

[*Bursting into gay laughter.*]

Aha, Sir William—you hear? Reserve your box
early! ’Twill be a royal benefit—for rebels!

HOWE

[*Joining his laughter.*]

Standing room only, I’ll wager! Put me down for
two boxes——

[*With another bow.*]

—if Mistress Betsy will be there to join the rebel-
lion.

BETSY

I thank thee, Sir; but ’tis the privilege of a Friend
to be neutral. I attend not the playhouse.

HOWE

Neutral? Never with those eyes, fair Mistress!
Nay, under that grey cloak of a Friend, I warrant
you’ll draw forth a shining blade for Washington!

BETSY

Only a needle, Sir. Polly sings for her country: I can only sew.

[Under her cloak is visible a cloth bundle, with needle and thread—through the wrapping of which is glimpsed a gleam of red, white and blue.]

HOWE

[Glancing.]

What's here?

[In confusion BETSY covers the bundle and speaks aside to POLLY.]

BETSY

Polly, speak quick. He must not discover it—the flag of our new country!

POLLY

[Saucily to HOWE, stepping between him and BETSY.]

'Tis shirts—for Valley Forge soldiers, Sir. Confiscate 'em if you dare—for his Majesty!

HOWE

Ah—unneutral needle!

[Pressing his heart.]

Already, Mistress Betsy, thou hast stabbed me mortally—here. I must fly for help—to Headquarters.

[Going.]

Captain, reserve me my box. Recover my lost heart

—and my dog. Dear old Jack! Damn Hessians! Splendid hound! Ladies, your most devoted! Ah—bye the bye! I pray you will all dine with me shortly—to meet the Marquis of Lafayette and General Washington. I'm expecting 'em soon—by pressing invitation. Long live Washington—under my roof! God save the king—and my good old Jack! Worth *twenty* battalions—that dog!

[Limping off on his cane, HOWE disappears through the curtains.]

POLLY

Funny old dragon!

[To ANDRÉ.]

We must be going, too!

ANDRÉ

Nay, charmer of dragons: stay one moment.

[As she waves good-bye to him.]

Not if I show you a secret?

POLLY

[Hesitating.]

Secret?

ANDRÉ

A grand state secret.—Behind those screens!

POLLY

Oh!—Stop, Betsy.—'Tis fate! We are—spies!

[*Returning, curious.*]

I've always felt I should hang for a state secret.

ANDRÉ

So have I, Mistress Polly! Resist not fate!

POLLY

[*Awesomely.*]

Must I swear not to tell?

ANDRÉ

You must swear to tell all Philadelphia—except Sir William.

POLLY

[*Raising her right hand.*]

Swear, Betsy!

ANDRÉ

Look!

[*He puts aside the screens, revealing behind them a gorgeous array of dresses, costumes and dyed cloths, hanging over standards.*]

POLLY

O tempter of Eve!—what are those?

ANDRÉ

[*Taking forth some of the costumes and draping them over the step-ladder.*]

For my *Mischianza*!

POLLY

Miss—what?

ANDRÉ

My pageant—the first in America: a medley of masques and music and dances! 'Tis for next spring—in honor of Sir William. Philadelphia shall go arrayed like Tyre and Sidon.

BETSY

[*With grave feeling.*]

While our patriot army goes naked.—Polly, come away!

ANDRÉ

[*Showing a robe of white silk, with spangled pink sash.*]

Look! This Polonaise—for a Lady of the Blended Rose.

POLLY

[*Snatching it from him.*]

O rapture!

ANDRÉ

'Tis for you, Mistress Polly. Picture yourself in a

veil of silver lace, with this headdress of pearls!

[*Showing another splendid robe, with bright sash.*]

And this—for a Lady of the Burning Mountain:—
for your friend, if she will deign to wear it.

BETSY

[*Turning away.*]

I will die before wearing it.

[*Glancing again at the red, white and blue of her half-concealed bundle.*]

The colors I revere are for an altar—not for a play-house.

POLLY

[*Pressing the robe to her heart.*]

Captain, I succumb: array me in this robe: shoot me at sunrise, and bury me in a crystal casket—at the feet of my hero, Washington!

BETSY

Polly, thou art gone daft with thy theatre crazes. Living or dead, let us be clothed in our duty.

ANDRÉ

“Living or dead, let me but be renowned!” That’s a line I speak tomorrow night, in my part of *Douglas*. Ah, dutiful Mistress Ross, do not scorn too much our theatre’s art. My duty is soldiering; yours—’tis sewing. Yet it may be that your life-task and mine today

—all our hearts' devotion to peace or war—shall survive tomorrow only in a player's part—or the refrain of a song.

BETSY

Duty, sir, thinks not of survival.

POLLY

But beauty longs for it, Betsy. Remember our Washington, even at Valley Forge, hath a theatre—for our starving patriots. They lack for clothes and bread—but not for players.

BETSY

[*Murmurs.*]
Valley Forge!

ANDRÉ

The art we share should heal our enmities. I pray
t will.

[*Dreamily, from nearby, strings of a dulcimer begin to play—a melody pensive and minor. BETSY, clutching tighter her bundle, stands gazing—her eyes fixed far off.*]

BETSY

[*Murmurs again.*]
Valley Forge! They are starving now at Valley Forge.

[*And now, to the dulcimer, the voice of QUILLOQUON is heard singing.*]

THE VOICE OF QUILLOQUON

She leaned herself against a thorn,
All alone and aloney,
And there her firstling sons were born,
Down by the cold hill-sidey.

[*POLLY looks questioningly toward ANDRÉ, who answers her look quietly.*]

ANDRÉ

An old ballad.

THE VOICE OF QUILLOQUON

[*Sings on.*]

She pullèd down her dark, dark hair,
All alone and aloney,
And bound it round their limbs so bare,
Down by the cold hill-sidey.

She pullèd out her snow-white breast,
All alone and aloney,
And bid them suck—'twould be her last,
Down by the cold hill-sidey.

BETSY

[*Murmurs.*]

The cold hill side.

[*She turns toward the curtained entrance. ANDRÉ speaks to her.*]

ANDRÉ

Pray, Mistress, wait! We are enemies—only in prose. In the heart of song, my England is yours, your America—mine. May we not be friends?

BETSY

To be a Friend, sir, is my faith. Yet there are times when friendship must be fought for. O Polly,—come!
[She goes swiftly out, left. POLLY is following.]

ANDRÉ

And you—?

POLLY

[Pausing at the entrance, hands back the pearl headdress to ANDRÉ.]

Dear Captain, fate may make us spies—but never traitors.

ANDRÉ

[Snatches her hand, kissing it.]
 Lady of fate!

[Restraining an impetuous gesture, POLLY hurries out. Left alone, ANDRÉ turns slowly back. The dulcimer is still playing. Looking at the pearls in his hand, ANDRÉ murmurs low:]
 Spies—but never traitors.

TRANSITION

Through the side curtains, QUILLOQUON enters with the Children. As they approach, their forms and the figure of ANDRÉ melt into greyish darkness, while their voices are singing.

THE VOICE OF QUILLOQUON

If God were here, O children mine,
 All alone and aloney,
He'd wrap you in the warm wool fine,
 Down by the cold hill-sidey.

THE CHILDREN

O Mother dear, whose eyes are there,
 All alone and aloney,
A-shining through your dark, dark hair,
 Down by the cold hill-sidey?

QUILLOQUON

If God it were, O children mine,
 All alone and aloney,
He'd warm your hearts with His red wine,
 Down by the cold hill-sidey.

THE CHILDREN

O Mother dear, His milk is best,
All alone and aloney,
 That warms us from your snow-white breast,
Down by the cold hill-sidey.

[During this, in complete darkness, the front curtains close, and now, from behind them, there resounds the explosion of a gun. At this sound the mood completely changes. Fifes and drums are heard, and a great burst of cheering. Then a louder gun explodes, and—while the curtains are opening in darkness—the voice of QUILLOQUON rings gaily, to a dance-step tune and rhythm.]

THE VOICE OF QUILLOQUON

[Sings.]

Gypsy Davy came over the sea,
 To his lingo-dingo-dance, sir:
 God keep merry Amer-i-kee!
 And vi-ve la bel-le Fran-ce!

Ree-attle-attle dingo-lingo-dingo,
Ree-attle-attle dingo-dance, sir:
 God keep merry Amer-i-kee!
 And vi-ve la bel-le Fran-ce!

[During this song the dark gradually changes, through dusky greyness, to broad day.]

SCENE II

The light reveals a scene of fantastic design and vivid color: a triumphal archway, constructed in the form of an arbor.

At the center, back, the arch is festooned with splendid cloth of gold, draped from its central keystone.

Overhead, the arbor roof is hung with tapestries fluorescent with designs of clustered fruits and flowers.

Under this gorgeous archway, a drab, contrasting group of tattered American soldiers (with sprigs of evergreen in their hats) half surround a ragged singer (QUILLOQUON). In the background others are seen in excited pantomime.

During this, from the right, two figures steal out and hasten furtively toward the background. One (POLLY) is dressed in a gown of white polonaise silk, with pearl headdress and spangled veil; the other (ANDRÉ) is clad in a great cloak embroidered with coats-of-arms, his face half hidden by a domino mask.

QUILLOQUON

[Singing and dancing to his tune.]

Gypsy Davy brought over his squad

With their own true love to lea-d 'em,

For the lass in the heart of every lad

Was the Gypsy-Queen of Free-dom.

*Ree-attle-attle dingo-lingo-dingo,
Ree-attle-attle dingo-dance, sir:
God keep merry Amer-i-kee!
And vi-ve la bel-le Fran-ce!*

*The Soldiers cheer, and look on laughing as QUIL-
LOQUON repeats his clog-dance steps, to the thrum-
ming of his dulcimer.*

*Meantime, the figure in the domino mask speaks quick
and low to his companion.*

ANDRÉ

Adorable Mistress Polly, adieu! General Washington and Lafayette have captured the city. General Howe and General Clinton are in full retreat. I must join them. Washington and his Valley Forge rabble are already close by. Philadelphia is lost and my heart with it.—Keep this remnant, in token of a poor soldier of paint pots.

*[He cuts off a gold button, kisses it and gives
it to her.]*

POLLY

Farewell, Captain André—first soldier-artist of America! Come back to us, when English cousins are friends again. Meantime, we will hate your old king—and adore your young memory.

ANDRÉ

[Ardently, removing his mask.]
You—Mistress Polly?

POLLY

Polonaise you were to call me!—See!

[Smiling, she points to her gown.]

ANDRÉ

[Glancing from the gown to the archway.]

Ah! fair phantasy of my Mischianza! A bubble of dreams—'tis burst. But it was beautiful?

POLLY

A triumph for all the Muses!

[In frightened tone, as Soldiers draw near.]

Quick. Put on your mask. They'll see you.

[The two steal toward the archway, as QUILLOQUON resumes his singing with the Soldiers.]

QUILLOQUON

So hark now, every Free-dom's man

And remember long and well, sir:

While David stands with Jon-a-than,

The Devil he'll stay in hell, sir.

[Dancing and singing with the Soldiers.]

Ree-attle-attle dingo-lingo-dingo,

Ree-attle-attle dingo-dance, sir:

God keep merry Amer-i-kee!

And vi-ve la bel-le Fran-ce!

[With this finale, QUILLOQUON dances off through the archway, left.]

POLLY

[*In a low voice, to ANDRÉ.*]

Escape. Be quick. God speed you!

ANDRÉ

[*Kissing her hand.*]

Till happier days!

[*He hurries off, right, in the background. A bugle blows outside. The Soldiers gather to attention.*

From the left background, through the archway, a Bugler (QUILLOQUON) enters, followed by a LITTLE GIRL and BOY, who walk backward strewing flowers before WASHINGTON, who comes in, accompanied by LAFAYETTE, HAMILTON, and other Officers.

Behind these more Soldiers and Civilians follow.]

WASHINGTON

[*Showing to the Officers an open letter in his hand.*]

Gentlemen,—listen! I have just received by post this letter from our Ambassador, Dr. Benjamin Franklin, in Paris:

[*He reads from the letter.*]

“I have the honor to inform you that this day the Alliance between France and the United States of America was officially signed and sealed.”

HAMILTON AND LAFAYETTE

[*In one breath.*]

The Alliance!

LAFAYETTE

Ha! Prophecy of my veins!

HAMILTON

Our first ally in the Old World—to unite both worlds for freedom.

[WASHINGTON *turns to LAFAYETTE and HAMILTON, extending both of them his hands. On either side, each seizes his hand and presses it.*]

WASHINGTON

Boys—my sons—young America and new France!

HAMILTON

[*With deep ardor.*]

Trenton—has led to Paris.

LAFAYETTE

Paris—has come home to Valley Forge!

WASHINGTON

And Valley Forge has driven Howe from Philadelphia! The tide is turning, friends.

[*As he is about to pass on, POLLY steps forward and, unclasping her necklace, tosses it in WASHINGTON'S path, making him a low curtsy.*]

WASHINGTON, *pausing with abruptness, bows aloofly.*]

Madam——

[*To his Orderly, BILLY.*]

Restore the lady's possessions.

POLLY

[*As BILLY lifts the necklace to hand it back.*]

Not mine, your Excellency. 'Tis legitimate loot. I have but robbed the plunder chest of Tyranny, to make offering on the altar of Freedom.

WASHINGTON

[*With a second bow of stiff politeness.*]

A well-meant sentiment, Madam. May I inquire whence you are from?

POLLY

[*Twinkling.*]

From the right bank of the Potomac, General: one o' your Virginia Jinnies.

WASHINGTON

[*His coldness breaking with a sudden glow.*]

My dear young lady—your name?

POLLY

Polly Redmond, of Fairfax County—ten miles from Mt. Vernon.

WASHINGTON

[With outright warmth.]

Mt. Vernon! Dear Mistress Polly—ten times welcome!

[Kissing her hand.]

Your devoted servant.

[Turning to LAFAYETTE.]

Mistress Polly—the Marquis of Lafayette.

LAFAYETTE

[Bowing to her hand.]

Chere dame de la Polonaise!

WASHINGTON

[Introducing the Civilian.]

And President Laurens—of the United States Congress.

[LAURENS bows.]

POLLY

Gentlemen of the Army and Congress, welcome home to your Capital.

[Pointing to the shield on the archway.]

You behold! The sunset of General Howe is the rising-sun of Washington. *Vive* the heroes of Valley Forge! But not all of us prisoners in Philadelphia are butterflies like myself—to flutter in your path. I beg leave, sir, to fetch forth from her hiding—a little moth in grey.

WASHINGTON

[*Smiling.*]

A moth, Mistress Polly?

POLLY

A young Quakeress, your Excellency, who spins from her grey cocoon the bright colors of liberty. With that silk, sir, the stars of your exile, and the stripes of your suffering, she has sewed in a flag for our country.—

[*Smiling.*]

By your own orders, General!

WASHINGTON

Ah! I remember.

POLLY

[*Calling at the doorstep, left.*]

Betsy! Betsy!

[*In the doorway appears the young Quakeress, carrying a furled banner. Seizing her gaily by the arm, POLLY brings her forward and presents her, with a curtsy.*]

Your Excellency and gentlemen—Mistress Betsy Ross, and the first flag of the United States of America!

[*Unfurling the flag, BETSY steps shyly forward, extending it toward WASHINGTON. There, as the Stripes and thirteen Stars float out, the Bugler (QUILLOQUON) blows on his bugle a joyous blast.*]

FINALE

*The blast of the bugle dies away in sudden darkness,
through which the voice of QUILLOQUON is heard
singing, to an old ballad tune:*

QUILLOQUON

Oh!—I've lost my heart to Betsy,
to Betsy,
to Betsy!

My heart I cross
To Betsy Ross,
With her glancety, dancety bars and stars
Of the red and white and blue.

*[Now, through a narrow opening of the blue
curtains, only the flag, held by BETSY, is still visi-
ble, and the form of QUILLOQUON dancing before
it with the two Children, who join in the refrain
of the song:]*

Oh—Because she sewed so neatly,
so neatly,
so neatly,

My heart I cross
To Betsy Ross,
With her glancety, dancety bars and stars
Of the red and white and blue.

[And now, in the background, the form of the Quakeress has disappeared, and the flag alone flutters like flame against the dark.]

And—Wherever she waves so sweetly,
so sweetly,
so sweetly,

My heart I cross
To Betsy Ross,
With her glancety, dancety bars and stars
Of the red and white and blue.

So—Carry me back to Betsy,
to Betsy,
to Betsy,

My heart that's lost
To Betsy Ross,
With her glancety, dancety bars and stars
Of the red and white and blue!

[A deep gun resounds. During its reverberations, the blue curtains close.]

END





